

Trinity School

Strand Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1JB

Inspection dates 15–16 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The co-headteachers, senior leaders, managers and governors share high expectations of students' conduct and learning. They are all highly committed to ensuring that every student makes the progress of which they are capable. The school is improving rapidly.
- Following a decline in achievement in English and mathematics in 2013, the school took effective steps to bring about improvement. Students are now achieving similar standards to most students nationally.
- Students, including disadvantaged students and boys, are making faster progress than in 2013 because of well-planned support and better teaching.
- Leaders have improved training for teachers and, as a result, teaching is now typically good.
- Students' behaviour around school is good. They get on well with each other and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Students have many opportunities to attend extra or smaller classes and clubs after school, and to find out at first-hand about different ways of life. They demonstrate a clear understanding of British values of respect and tolerance in their own behaviour to others.
- The subjects offered in the curriculum, together with carefully planned events and experiences, prepare students well for the future and contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The sixth form has gone from strength to strength and is now outstanding. Students make very good progress, achieve high standards and demonstrate exemplary attitudes; they leave the sixth form very well equipped to succeed in the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not yet lead to outstanding progress for the majority of students.
- Students' writing skills are not as strong as their reading skills.
- Some disadvantaged students and some boys are not yet making consistently outstanding progress.
- Key Stage 3 students are not always clear about the targets they have to reach or how close they are to achieving them.
- Feedback to students about their work is stronger in some subjects and key stages than in others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups and in a wide range of subjects. Some learning was seen jointly by inspectors and senior school leaders.
- Inspectors visited tutor time sessions and talked to many students formally and informally in lessons, at break and lunchtimes and around the school generally.
- Inspectors looked extensively at students' work in their books in a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- Inspectors met with the two co-headteachers, senior and subject leaders, middle leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A wide range of school documents were scrutinised. These included information about students' progress and the standards they are reaching; safeguarding and child protection; attendance; and behaviour. Inspectors also looked closely at the school's own evaluation of its work; planning for future development; subject planning; documents about the school's management of teachers' performance; and the school's records of the monitoring of teaching.
- The views of staff were gathered from 97 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked closely at the views of parents from the school's survey; the 100 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View); and an email sent to the school for the inspection team. A telephone conversation also took place between an inspector and a parent.

Inspection team

Nell Banfield, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Frank Cain	Additional Inspector
Georgiana Sale	Additional Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Additional Inspector
Peter Eeva	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average secondary school with a sixth form. The school became an academy in September 2011. It has an Anglican foundation.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by pupil premium funding is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- Most students are of White British heritage. Very few students are in the early stages of learning English.
- A very small proportion of students than found nationally is looked after by the local authority.
- The school has resourced provision for hearing impaired students, with currently six students on roll.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of students from Year 10 and 11 attend courses away from the school site for some or all of their time. They study English, mathematics, vocational subjects and follow personalised courses including work experience placements at Hedley Construction; the local authority's pupil referral unit; Cumbria Truck Centre; City Reach; the Education Youth Service; Community Reach; and David Mason Plumbing.
- The school works with the Local Alliance of School Leaders and the Carlisle Secondary Learning Consortium to ensure that standards continue to improve rapidly. The school is a lead school for a group of 33 schools for School Direct and is applying to be one of three secondary schools, along with four primary schools, in the proposed 'Teaching Better Together' teaching school alliance.
- The school has been designated a Stonewall Champion School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding so all students make even faster progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers effectively develop students' spelling and writing skills in extended writing, including for the most-able students
 - making sure that students in Key Stage 3 know how well they are doing by being aware of their starting points at the beginning of the year, their targets for the end of the year, and how close they are to achieving their targets, especially in English and mathematics
 - extending the best practice in marking and feedback to students about their written work to all subjects across the school.
- Improve leadership and management further by ensuring that all leaders take effective steps to speed up the progress of those remaining disadvantaged students and boys who are not yet making sufficiently rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- All staff share the co-headteachers' and governors' determination that the school will offer the best provision possible to students. All staff feel very positive about the steps taken to improve the achievement of students and have used the improved training well to improve their teaching.
- School leaders sought challenging support from external professionals, including a national leader of education (NLE), in order to improve their evaluation of the quality of teaching. All leaders, including subject leaders, now have an accurate and detailed view of the quality of teaching across the school. Because of this improved and more accurate scrutiny, teaching is now good.
- Standards and progress are regularly and thoroughly monitored to make sure students are achieving their increasingly challenging targets. This is historically stronger in Key Stage 4 but is now developing well in Key Stage 3. Regular scrutiny of students' written work is used to check the progress students are making.
- Governors and school leaders have very effectively managed teachers' performance. Teachers are clear that good performance will only be recognised by progression up the salary scales if students' achievement is also good.
- The school has very effective systems in place to ensure that students are aware of future education, training and work opportunities. Starting in Year 7, students are guided carefully at all stages to choose the most appropriate courses and qualifications to ensure success in the future, including appropriate universities.
- The pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is used increasingly effectively. Those students supported by this additional funding are making better progress and are successful in consistently settling to work. In 2014, the progress of all students, including disadvantaged students, increased and the standards all students reached also increased. Because all groups have improved their achievement, the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students in the school has not yet disappeared. However, the school's measures of students' achievement indicate any remaining differences are reducing rapidly.
- The small number of students who attend courses away from the school site are guided towards suitable courses which engage and interest them. These offer them experiences and qualifications that help them achieve well. Students' attendance at this provision is good. Their introduction to any new setting is carefully managed so that they are safe in travelling to and from the setting and while they are on site. Designated staff visit regularly and check students are safe, behave well and make good progress.
- The school sets up links with a wide range of agencies to ensure that students have the chance to talk to people from different backgrounds. Staff have benefited from training from professionals from the Stonewall equality organisation and students have had the opportunity to listen to speakers with Buddhist and Muslim beliefs. Students report regularly on their BBC School News and have interviewed other students, and reported on, young persons' views on the recent budget. Students also interviewed a senior manager of a nuclear power plant and reported on the decommissioning plan for the facility. Students visit their linked school in Uganda and, on their return, help other students in the school to reflect on what it is like to be a student there.
- Through these experiences, students acquire a clear and well-informed view of current issues, including British values and democracy, and develop tolerance and understanding of diverse life styles and beliefs. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are well supported by this range of experiences. Good relationships are promoted well and discrimination is tackled effectively so that all students have an equal opportunity to flourish and succeed.
- The curriculum has recently been reviewed. Students in Key Stage 3 now make better progress in Year 7 because their studies are planned so that they progress from their achievement in primary school. Courses and choices in Key Stage 4 are now more closely linked to students' achievement and prepare them well for future education, training or employment.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive. They say the school develops a strong and positive partnership with the vast majority of them.
- Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary. Leaders and all staff go beyond their roles to ensure that all students are safe and cared for well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective. Governors have a very good range of experience and expertise. As a result, they understand clearly about school finance, data and teaching, and closely question reports they are given. They are unrelenting in expecting students and staff to give of their best. They ensure that training and support for teachers and the quality of teaching for students help to accomplish this

aim.

- Governors understand how the additional Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is used and how its effectiveness is measured. They know that most disadvantaged students, and most boys, are making much better progress. They also question what the school is doing to make sure that all disadvantaged students and boys match their progress with that of the best.
- Governors have supported school leaders well in establishing a transparent system to reward good teaching and action to address any underperformance. They have backed school leaders in appointing additional staff, including senior staff, to ensure that improvement happens rapidly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. The vast majority of students have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They respond well to teachers' high expectations, are engaged in their learning and attend additional sessions to catch up on and practise their work so that they can improve their progress.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form is exemplary. Their mature conduct provides excellent role models for younger students.
- Most students are exceptionally respectful of others' opportunity to learn. They moved quietly with minimal input from staff while students performed a music examination piece in the main foyer of the school. Occasionally, less than good behaviour in lessons interrupts other students' learning. When this happens, it is responded to quickly and effectively by most teachers.
- Students develop confidence and communication skills well through the range of leadership opportunities, fund raising, confidence building and team building events. They have the chance to have their efforts recognised, such as becoming the 'homework champion'.
- Students move around the large school building well, use the facilities responsibly and arrive punctually to lessons. There are one or two areas in the building where students move around at the same time and where younger students might feel vulnerable; staff respond quickly to this and most students manage the movement sensibly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school makes exceptional efforts to ensure that all staff are fully trained in safeguarding. Documentation is detailed and all arrangements support effective practice. Students who are looked after by the local authority are very well supported and several have high profile roles in the school.
- Students state they feel safe in and around school. They say bullying is rare and they would be confident to turn to a member of staff if they or their friend was being bullied. They are clear that any use of discriminatory language, such as casual name calling because of different sexual orientation, is unacceptable and will be challenged.
- Students are very well supported in understanding how they may be putting themselves at risk in relation to drugs, alcohol and relationships, and know how to manage their use of social media. They are given good guidance so that they understand about how to manage their finances.
- Students' attendance has improved and is similar to national averages. A small number of students continue to be persistently absent, despite support from the attendance officer, the family support worker and legal action. The number of students excluded from school for short periods has reduced significantly since 2014. Students whose behaviour is not acceptable now complete work from lessons, or discuss any problems they are having, in a designated room in school. This helps them to settle back successfully into learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is sufficiently consistent to support good progress across subjects and year groups, including in English and mathematics. Teaching has improved and that which is less than good has decreased rapidly, especially since September 2014.
- Teachers, especially in Key Stages 4 and 5, use assessments of students' progress regularly to identify any student who is falling behind so they can be supported to catch up quickly. These regular and thorough checks are increasingly happening in Key Stage 3.

- Students in Key Stage 4 and 5 know their targets and how close they are to achieving them. Not all students in Key Stage 3 are similarly clear about how well they are working towards the standards they need to reach.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support students who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Support is sensitively given so that students build confidence and understand clearly what they have to do.
- Students read widely and often in a number of lessons and in form-time sessions. In English in Year 8, they work on sophisticated texts such as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Chaucer. Teaching in mathematics has improved and is now good. Students are gaining increasing confidence in using calculations and mathematical processes as a result. The school is now in a position where leaders can extend students' confidence in using mathematics across all subjects.
- Students are confident in taking responsibility for their own learning, such as in physical education sessions, where they organise themselves in warm-up and practice sessions. In these, they show good understanding of how to stretch and increase pace or develop technique. This indicates good teaching over time. The teacher skilfully adapted the lesson so students of different abilities worked at their own level. Students made progress because the skills and techniques they worked on were neither too easy nor too hard.
- The majority of teachers use questioning very successfully to insist students use more sophisticated vocabulary to explain what they know and understand. They also ask students to explain their answers in more detail, so that they can explain their thinking more clearly in their writing. Students produce high quality extended writing as a result. However, there are some lessons where students are not given the opportunity to practise explaining what they know or understand, and this limits the quality of their writing. Some of the most-able students spell commonly used words incorrectly, or are sometimes given spellings to practise that are too simple and do not extend their vocabulary.
- Marking in Key Stage 4 and 5, and in some subjects such as modern foreign languages, is thorough and helpful. Students make faster progress because teachers give students short tasks to practise in the areas where learning is not yet secure. However, this is less often seen in Key Stage 3 where the quality and regularity of marking and feedback to students is less consistent. Students say they find feedback helpful and that without it they are less clear about what they need to work on in order to improve.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school in Year 7 working at standards similar to or above the standards of most students nationally. Although published figures for attainment and progress in 2014 show average and below average achievement generally, this is based on students' first entry to GCSE examinations. When examinations were re-taken later in the year, the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes, including good passes in English and mathematics, increased from 51% to 59%.
- The school has reviewed its approach to entering students early for key examinations and has not applied this practice during this academic year.
- The published data for 2014 also shows some underachievement of disadvantaged students and of boys in English. Again, when examinations were re-taken later in the year, the measures improved for these groups. Data show that the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students, both in the school and nationally, decreased.
- The most-able students in Key Stage 4 did not achieve well in 2014 in comparison with similar students nationally. However, the progress of this group has accelerated since September 2014 as a result of the school's actions. The most-able students, including those in Key Stage 3, are making faster progress as a result of better teaching. This is confirmed by the school's scrutiny of their written work and assessments of their progress.
- Progress in English has been stronger than in mathematics in the past, but progress in mathematics has accelerated rapidly since September 2014 as a result of improved teaching. Inspectors' observations in both subjects confirmed the majority of students are now making good progress.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs has improved. They are now making progress similar to the progress made by students with similar needs nationally. Students in the hearing impaired resource base make good progress and are well supported in attending lessons in the school. Support for students to manage their impairment is excellent.
- Overall, disadvantaged students achieve well. Pupil premium funding supports a range of extra teaching, actions and provision to improve attendance and to improve attitudes to learning of disadvantaged students. In Year 11 in 2014, published data showed disadvantaged students attained two-thirds of a

grade lower than other students in the school in English and a full grade lower than other students in the school in mathematics. Compared with other students nationally, disadvantaged students attained half a grade lower in English and a grade and a half below in mathematics. In Year 11 in 2014, when examinations were re-taken, disadvantaged students in the school achieved standards close to non-disadvantaged students nationally.

- The small number of students who attend courses away from the school site for some or all of the time make good progress. This is checked regularly on visits by senior and pastoral staff.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Achievement in the sixth form has improved steadily over the last three years as a result of increasingly outstanding teaching. Achievement is overall outstanding. Sixth form leaders have been relentless in ensuring that any less than good teaching is quickly improved. As a result of robust leadership, students have consistently increased their progress because teaching has been consistently strong.
- Groups of students achieve high standards in academic and vocational courses, and at AS and A level. Students who enter the sixth form working below grade C at GCSE make rapid progress and achieve high standards. Students who re-take GCSE English and mathematics achieve above average results.
- There are few disadvantaged students in the sixth form and this small number make the same outstanding progress as the majority of students.
- The sixth form offers a good range of academic and vocational courses to enable students to follow different routes after Year 13. A high proportion of students continued their chosen courses from Year 12 into Year 13. All students who applied to university achieved sufficiently high grades at A level to acquire a place.
- Teaching is good and often outstanding. Effective teaching ensures that all groups of students achieve their target grades. Swift and effective action is taken if the monitoring of teaching and progress identifies any student not making sufficient progress. Appropriate support is provided.
- The school exceeds the requirements for 16 to 19 study. The extra-curricular opportunities enjoyed by students develop excellent skills for life after school, whether that be apprenticeships, university or the world of work.
- Sixth form students provide excellent models of maturity for younger students. They provide formal mentoring support for students through sixth form leadership links with the House groups in the main school. They also ensure that outcomes from discussion in the school council are communicated with the head boy and head girl so that the issues can be taken forward. Attendance is good and behaviour is exemplary.
- Students feel safe in the sixth form. The curriculum and additional activities ensure that they have the knowledge and understanding to keep themselves safe, including from exploitation and extremism, to manage their finances and to make informed decisions about their future.
- Sixth form leaders are vigilant in identifying and supporting vulnerable students. They monitor teaching closely and take prompt and effective steps to address any areas of potential weakness. The impact is evident in improvements to both teaching and students' achievement.
- Students are skilfully guided in making the right course selections. As a result, most stay and complete their courses and go on to further study at universities or into employment.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137369
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	461768

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,561
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Armstrong
Headteacher	Derek Kay and Sheila Johnston (co-headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2012
Telephone number	01228 516051
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Email address	info@trinity.cumbria.sch.uk

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